In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A device for optical distance measurement, in particular a handheld device, having an emission branch (14) which defines an emission channel and has at least one emission unit (22, 24) for emitting modulated optical radiation (36) in the direction of a target object (20), having a reception branch (18) which defines a reception channel (44) and has at least one receiver (54), and having a reference branch (15) which defines a reference path (40), and having switch means (38) for deflecting the measurement signal (36) between the emission branch (14) and the reference branch (15), characterized in that the switch means (38) are mechanically driven, wherein the switch means (38) are driven by mechanical work that is to be performed by a user at a user control element (84) of the device.

Claim 2 cancelled.

3. (currently amended) The device as defined by claim ~~2~~1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the switch means (38) are operated by the measurement button (84) for performing a distance measurement.

4. (currently amended) The device as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the switch means (38) are to be actuated counter to the restoring force of an adjusting moment.

5. (currently amended) The device as defined by claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the switch means (38) are to be actuated counter to the force of at least one spring-elastic element (94, 98).

6. (currently amended) The device as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the switch means (38) are embodied such that the measurement radiation (36) traverses the reference path (40), if the switch means (38) are not activated.

7. (currently amended) The device as defined by claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the switch means (38) close the emission branch (14) in the event that the measurement button (84) for activating a distance measurement is not activated.